What you and your
son or daughter should
know about Indiana's
Graduation
Qualifying Exam

For more information, contact the Indiana Department of Education Room 229, State House Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2798

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### A DIPLOMA THAT MEANS MORE

Indiana high school graduates must meet the Graduation Qualifying Exam (GQE) requirement in addition to earning the credits required to qualify for an Indiana high school diploma. The GQE measures Grade 9 skills in English/language arts and mathematics.

The GQE was added to state law in 1992 by the Indiana General Assembly as a response to concerns expressed by parents, employers, and the higher education community. These groups saw that some graduates were leaving high school and entering the workforce and postsecondary education without the skills needed to succeed. Meeting the GQE standard will help ensure that your son or daughter has mastered the essential skills in reading, writing, and mathematics.

# THE EMPHASIS IS ON SUCCESS

Hoosier students deserve a quality education—one that will give them the skills necessary to compete successfully in an increasingly demanding world. Identifying students who need help in reading, writing, and mathematics is an important task. By taking the GQE for the first time in the fall of their sophomore year, students who need

help with basic skills and their abilities to apply these skills can be identified while there is still time to provide them with the instructional assistance they need. Students will have at least four additional opportunities to pass the test, two times each in Grades 11 and 12.

# BETTER EVALUATION LEADS TO BETTER EDUCATION

The GQE is designed to test basic and applied skills through the use of multiple-choice, short-answer, and essay responses to questions and the solving of mathematical problems. By using real-life applications and asking students to show how they arrived at answers, the test results demonstrate what students know and are able to do in English/language arts and mathematics.

Indiana's GQE is a continuation of the Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress-Plus (ISTEP+) program with which you and your son or daughter are familiar. The GQE consists of two sections: English/language arts and mathematics. Your son or daughter will receive separate scores on each of these two sections. Scores will reflect a student's knowledge of the subject and his or her ability to apply that knowledge. This combination of basic and applied skills makes the assessment more meaningful, accurate, and timely. It also distinguishes the Indiana GQE from many of the basic skills tests used in other states.

# A WINNING COMBINATION

ndiana's high school GQE will play an important role in helping to ensure that your child receives an education that prepares him or her to face the future, but the GQE is only one piece of the equation. A quality education is a combination of many things, including skillful teaching, student interaction, attendance, academic coursework, accurate and timely evaluation, remediation, communication, and parental involvement.

It is important that you are involved in your son or daughter's education. Make sure your son or daughter understands what is expected.

# WHAT YOU AND YOUR SON OR DAUGHTER SHOULD KNOW

#### When is the GQE taken?

The GQE will be taken in the fall of your son or daughter's sophomore year (Grade 10). The test dates are established by the Indiana State Board of Education. Completion of the GQE will take about 6.5 hours, and test-taking will be spread out over three days.

#### When will the results be available?

Test results will be provided to schools as soon as possible during the first semester. It is important for you to know that an Individual Student Report and imaged copies of your son or daughter's work on the applied skills sections of the test are returned to schools to enable parents, teachers, and students to see for themselves how students performed on the applied skills items.

#### What are the subjects covered in the GQE?

The GQE covers basic and applied skills, including reading ability, reading comprehension, vocabulary, writing skills, and mathematics outlined in Indiana's Grade 9 Academic Standards.

### What are Indiana's Academic Standards and how were they developed?

Indiana's Academic Standards include specific knowledge and skills that have been identified as necessary for students to know and be able to do to succeed in higher education and in the workplace. The

Academic Standards were adopted by the Indiana State Board of Education after study and consideration by a group of teachers, parents, business/community leaders, administrators, and students.

Academic Standards define the skills and knowledge that a student should have, and the things that he or she should know in each subject, at each grade level.

#### How are tests graded?

Tests are graded by college graduates, many of whom have advanced degrees and teaching licenses. All are trained in scoring. The scoring takes place in Indiana and follows strict scoring rules. Scores are based on correct answers as well as content, level of understanding of questions, and ability to communicate answers.

#### What is the score needed to pass the GQE?

The passing score is set by the Indiana State Board of Education, based upon recommendations by mathematics and English teachers. The passing score in English is 466, and the passing score in mathematics is 486.

### How can a student prepare for the test?

Students can best prepare for ISTEP+ or any test by keeping current with their schoolwork. Parents should attend parentteacher conferences and be aware of how their son or daughter is doing in each course.

## Does a student get only one chance to pass?

No. The door never closes on a student's opportunity to earn an Indiana high school diploma. Students have the opportunity to take the GQE one time in their sophomore year and two times each in their junior and senior years. If, after the fifth attempt, a student has not passed the GQE, the student can continue to take advantage of remediation opportunities and continue to test during GQE testing times. Once a student passes a section (i.e., English/language arts or mathematics), the student does not need to retake that section.

## What extra help is available from the school for students who do not pass?

Schools receive money to provide remediation services to all students who do not score at or above the passing score. It is primarily the schools' responsibility to provide remedial assistance to students. It is, however, students' and parents' responsibility to take advantage of all offered assistance.

### When a student passes the GQE, does the student still need to meet other requirements in order to be eligible to receive a high school diploma?

Yes. Meeting the GQE standard is only one requirement a student must meet in order to be eligible for an Indiana high school diploma. A student must complete all other state and local requirements needed to receive a diploma. If you have questions about the state and local requirements

necessary to earn a diploma, please contact your high school guidance counselor.

### What if a student earns enough credits to graduate, but does not pass the GQE?

State law provides that a student may graduate without passing the GQE if all of the following have occurred:

#### The student must have:

- Taken the GQE in the subject area or subject areas in which the student did not achieve a passing score at least one time every school year during his or her sophomore, junior, and senior years in high school.
- Completed remediation opportunities provided by the school.
- Maintained a high school attendance rate of 95 percent with excused absences not counted against the student's attendance.
- Maintained a "C" average in the courses that make up the 24 credits specifically required for graduation (English/language arts, science, social studies, mathematics, technology, health and safety, and basic physical education).
- Obtained a written recommendation supporting the request for the appeal from the student's teacher(s) in the subject area(s) in which the student has not achieved a passing score.

The recommendation must be agreed to by the principal of the school, and be supported by documentation that the student has attained the academic standard in the subject area, based upon tests other than the GQE or classroom work. In addition, a student must have satisfied all other state and local graduation requirements.

Note: A student who receives special education services must have the written recommendation of the case conference committee supporting the request for the alternate documentation from his or her teacher of record, in consultation with the teacher(s) in the subject area(s) in which the student has not achieved a passing score on the GQE. In addition, the student's case conference committee makes the decision concerning how frequently a student will retake the GQE and complete remediation.

### What if my son or daughter is enrolled in special education?

All students are required to demonstrate that they have met the achievement standards measured by the GQE in order to graduate. If your son or daughter receives instructional or testing accommodations, these should be specified in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan. Many of these accommodations are allowed during ISTEP+testing (though reading comprehension portions of the test cannot be read to the student).

If a student's case conference committee determines that the GQE is not an appropriate test for a student, then the student should participate in an alternate assessment. Participating in an alternate assessment does not qualify a student for

meeting the GQE requirement necessary to receive a diploma.

### What if a student completes Core 40, but does not pass the GQE?

Completing Core 40 with a "C" or better in all directed and elective Core 40 courses along with the written recommendation of the student's high school principal is the third way to meet the GQE requirement. However, students who plan to complete Core 40 must take the GQE as sophomores and must take retests as needed.

Core 40 is the high school curriculum that prepares students minimally for college. Core 40 consists of a single, flexible high school curriculum that, except for electives, is based on a single set of agreed-upon competencies. These competencies direct the content of both college prep and tech prep courses. The difference between college prep and tech prep courses is not in content, but rather in the instructional and learning approaches of these courses. Core 40 includes a series of academically challenging courses in English, mathematics, science, and social studies. A student also must complete directed electives selected from foreign language, fine arts, computers, or technical career areas

### Indiana Academic Standards Grade 9 (for testing at Grade 10)

#### I. Language Arts Fundamentals

Select and apply effective strategies for reading.

- 1.1 Use meaning (semantic), structural (syntactic), and sound (phonetic) clues to construct meaning.
- 1.2 Make comparisons and predictions.
- Use headings, pictures, captions, and other textural clues.
- 1.4 Read from and understand different points of view (not reported).
- 1.5 Make and defend judgments about quality and content of material (not reported).

Select and use developmentally appropriate strategies for writing.

- 10.6a Use the writing process—prewriting, drafting, and revising.
- 10.6b Use the writing process—editing.
- 10.7 Edit and proofread for selected punctuation and capitalization.
- 10.8 Edit and proofread for usage.
- 10.9 Edit and proofread for spelling.
- 10.10 Revise written text for clarity, coherence, economy, and voice.

Use Prior knowledge and content area information to make critical judgments.

- 10.11 Make inferences from what is read and heard.
- 10.12 Identify cause and effect relationships.
- 10.13 Identify author's/writer's purpose and perspective (main idea/theme).
- Compare and contrast presented material.
- 10.15 Understand how language is used to influence and persuade.
- 10.16 Distinguish between fact and opinion.

#### II. Language Arts Applications

Comprehend developmentally appropriate materials, a broad variety of literature, magazines, and newspapers (written for a general adult audience), technical proce-dures (as in computer use), and routine business documents (note: Students also should be able to comprehend develop-mentally appropriate materials from previous grades).

10.17 Determine the literal meaning of written text.

Write for different purposes and audiences.

10.18 Produce a variety of forms including persuasive writing, synthesis and analysis of information from a variety of sources, complex forms, proced-ures, and directions (note: Students also should be able to write for the purposes and audiences identified for previous grades—not reported).

Recognize the interrelatedness of language and literature.

10.19 Develop critieria for judging the quality of literary works (common literary genres, literary conventions, and story structure).

#### I. Mathematics Fundamentals

- 10.4 Develop an understanding of basic algebraic concepts and skills, and apply those skills requiring algebraic manipulation to solve equations and inequalities (algebra).
- 10.5 Develop an understanding of elementary functions, their graphs, and their applications to the real world (functions).
- 10.6 Develop an understanding of two- and three-dimensional geometric figures as they apply to realistic problems (geometry).
- 10.7 Develop an understanding of descriptive statistics (statistics).
- 10.8 Develop an understanding of probability (probability).
- 10.9 Use computational skills and concepts with appropriate technology and/or paper and pencil to solve simple word problems (computation).

#### II. Mathematics Applications

- 10.1 Select and apply problem-solving methods in a realistic context (problemsolving).
- 10.2 Communicate mathematical ideas orally and in writing, as well as their power and usefulness, as they apply to the real world (communication).
- 10.3 Use inductive and deductive reasoning to solve problems (reasoning).